

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT MOSCOW 18345 ACTION SECSTATE INFO COLOMBO
ISLAMABAD KUALALUMPUR LONDON USNATO NEWDELHI PARIS
SINGAPORE TEHRAN DEC 21

QUOTE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 18345

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, UR, US, XO

SUBJ: TASS COMMENTS ON INDIAN OCEAN TALKS

SUMMARY: TASS POLITICAL COMMENTARY ON DEC. 20 HAS EXCITED
SOME INTEREST IN WESTERN PRESS CORPS, APPARENTLY DUE TO
DEC. 18 NYT STORY BY RICHARD BURT. WE CONSIDER TASS PIECE
TO BE STANDARD SOVIET COMMENTARY ON THE INDIAN OCEAN
SITUATION. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO CONNECTION WITH BURT
ARTICLE.END SUMMARY.

1. TASS POLITICAL COMMENTATOR ALEXEI PETROV HAS LONG
CRITIQUE OF OPPONENTS OF SOVIET-AMERICAN INDIAN OCEAN
NEGOTIATIONS ON TASS-ENGLISH WIRE DECEMBER 20. SOVIET
CENTRAL PRESS HAS NOT THUS FAR CARRIED PIECE. WE
ASSUME DEPARTMENT HAS FULL TASS OR FBIS TEXT; WE
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HAVE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE PIECE, WHICH HAS ATTRACTED
SOME PRESS ATTENTION HERE.

-- THE PETROV PIECE CLEARLY IS NOT PROMPTED BY,
OR IN REPLY TO, THE RICHARD BURT NYT STORY OF DEC 18
(CARRIED IN DEC. 19 WIRELESS FILE BECAUSE THE FOCUS IS
DIRECTED AT THE CHINESE AND OTHER OPPONENTS OF THE

NEGOTIATIONS, NOT AT USG ATTITUDES, AND BECAUSE THE LEAD TIME IS TOO SHORT FOLLOWING THE APPEARANCE OF THE BURT ARTICLE. WESTERN NEWSMEN HERE, NONE-THELESS, HAVE SPECULATED THAT THERE MAY BE A CONNECTION AND THAT PETROV'S REFERENCES TO "DARING AND RADICAL STEPS" MAY BE LINKED TO BURT'S REPORT OF A NEW SOVIET PROPOSAL IN THE TALKS.

-- THE AUTHOR CRITICIZES "THE U.S. OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE" (PRESUMABLY AN UNNAMED AMERICAN AMBASSADOR) IN A LITTORAL STATE FOR SUGGESTING THAT MOSCOW WOULD NOT AGREE "TO FULLY WITHDRAW THE NAVAL FORCES FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN --THE TOPIC OF THE CURRENT NEGOTIATION." PETROV SUGGESTS THAT THIS IS NOT THE "TOPIC" AND FURTHER ON IN THE COMMENTARY DEFINES THE SOVIET OBJECTIVE AS BEING "TO ELIMINATE ALL FOREIGN MILITARY BASES (IN THE INDIAN OCEAN) AND REDUCE THE MILITARY PRESENCE OF NON-COASTAL STATES." WE DO NOT RECALL A CLEARER PUBLIC STATEMENT RECENTLY THAT SHOWS THAT, DESPITE ITS ANNOUNCED SUPPORT OF THE IOPZ CONCEPT, THE USSR IS NOT IN FAVOR OF COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF ITS FORCES FROM THE AREA.

-- THE SHARPEST WORDS IN THE ARTICLE ARE RESERVED FOR THE CHINESE, ADM. MOORER, ALVIN COTTRELL, AND AN (AGAIN UNNAMED) FOREIGN MINISTER OF A LITTORAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATE FOR THEIR CRITICAL REFERENCES TO THE NEGOTIATION. THESE TARGETS, EXCEPT FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HAVE ALL BEEN DEALT WITH RECENTLY BY SOVIET COMMENTARIES ON THE ISSUE.

2. THERE IS NO CRITICISM, EXPLICIT OR IMPLIED, OF THE U.S. OR ITS CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE ONLY REFERENCE TO AMB. WARNKE IS FAVORABLE AS IS THE AUTHOR'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF CHANCES FOR SUCCESS OF THE BILATERAL TALKS. IN SUM THE ARTICLE DOES NOT DEPART FROM THE STANDARD LINES WHICH HAVE MARKED ALMOST ALL SOVIET COMMENT ON THE SUBJECT SINCE THE TALKS BEGAN. TOON UNQUOTE VANCE

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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